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severely true to themselves and duty become, not dazzling meteors to lure armies to victory, nor triumphant leaders to dazzle and win mankind to the superstitious abrogation of their rights, but oracles of public faith, representatives of what is highest in our common nature, and therefore an authority which it is noble and ennobling to recognize. The appellative so heartily, and by common instinct, bestowed upon Washington, is a striking proof of this, and gives a deep significance to the beautiful idea, that "Providence left him childless, that his country might call him — Father."

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ART. II. — *Five Years in Damascus. Including an Account of the History, Topography, and Antiquities of that City; with Travels and Researches in Palmyra, Lebanon, and the Hauran.* By Rev. J. L. PORTER, A. M., F. R. S. L. In Two Volumes, with Maps and Illustrations. London: John Murray. 1855. 12mo. pp. 395, 372.

AN attractive and a comprehensive title! At last our desire shall be satisfied, and we shall have, from one who knows whereof he speaks, a veracious account of the ancient, romantic, and mystic city. In these delicious volumes, between these fascinating orange-colored covers, we shall doubtless find the condensed experience of five most wonderful years. The longest stay of ordinary tourists in Damascus hardly reaches to five days. Most persons succeed in "doing" all the sights and cramming the note-book in the course of forty-eight hours. In that brief space, they get curious and novel impressions enough to last them for a lifetime. But in the short narratives of these hasty tourists, there is, both to writer and reader, an uncomfortable sense of probable inaccuracy. Fact and fable come too close together in that Oriental region to enable one easily to separate them. Poetry blends with history, not only in the daily tales of the *cafés*, but in the blossoms of the gardens, the flow of the rivers, and the stones of the wall. One needs to have lived long enough in Damascus for the enchantment to wear itself away, before he can be sure

of speaking about it sober and truthful words. As Naples cannot be judged fairly while one remembers that conceited proverb, "*Vede Napoli, é piu muore*," so to judge wisely of the Arab capital, one must forget that vainer Moslem proverb, "He who has seen Damascus, has known Paradise already."

Beside the length of his residence in Damascus, Mr. Porter has some special qualifications which make his story reliable. He has too little fancy to invent or to embellish, and too much vanity to conceal anything that he saw. In this respect he differs both from Buckingham and Burckhardt, the one being often indebted to his imagination for his facts, and the other omitting from modesty much that he ought to have stated. Mr. Porter, throughout his volumes, keeps prominent his own individuality; but, fortunately, the individuality in this case is very prosaic, and has no "familiar spirit" to adorn its palpable experience. He is not often drawn to break the level details of events by fine rhetorical flights, and rarely stops, after describing a scene, a monument, or a ruin, to offer any profound conjectures or reflections. If, in a second edition, the sentences could be so altered as to get rid of the show of egotism, and the conspicuous words "Drawn by J. L. Porter" could be omitted from the margin of the maps and plates, it would add considerably to the tastefulness of the volumes. In beauty of type and paper, clearness of style, convenience of arrangement, and copiousness of notes and index, they are all that could be desired.

Mr. Porter errs, as we think, in allowing so small a portion of his work — less than one sixth — to the description of the city and its vicinity; — a living wonder, much more interesting than any of the ruined cities which he describes. Yet it is pleasant to follow him in his excursions through mountain and desert regions to Palmyra, and Hums, and Helbon, over the inhospitable plains of the Hauran, and up to the summit of Hermon. There is no cause for regret that our author has published his travels in these directions; for he has told some things entirely new, has confirmed some uncertain statements, and has corrected many mistakes of previous travellers. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of his journeyings is the new map which is appended to his second volume, the entire

accuracy of which there is no reason to doubt. No reliable chart of the region east and south of Damascus had been made before this ; a circumstance which has no doubt tended to hinder frequent explorations in what would otherwise have been, and hereafter is likely to be, an attractive region to travellers. The shadings of this map at once rectify the false, but common notion, that the country around Damascus is all a vast and dreary plain. They show that this plain is traversed by regular ranges of mountains, and diversified by highland and lowland, by lakes and rivers. The journey to Palmyra has a picturesque variety as refreshing, if not as striking, as the journey to Baalbec ; and the route to Bozrah, though it be through a territory nearly wasted and half forsaken, has none of the monotony of a desert march.

The ground-plans of the most important ruined cities, which Mr. Porter has inserted, are also valuable additions to the observations which he has recorded. It is impossible, without some such help to the eye, to gain any clear idea of the appearance and disposition of the scattered fragments that remain in these Oriental towns. The plans here given make it as easy to find one's way in the streets of Palmyra or Bozrah, as in those of Pompeii and Eleusis. Mr. Porter's excellent diagram of the streets of Damascus will save any one hereafter from the nervous fear of losing his way in the crowded thoroughfares of that labyrinthine city. The numerous illustrations of the book, too, are generally in good taste, and always well executed ; and the representations in Greek type of the inscriptions copied from stone are more admirable than we remember to have seen elsewhere.

In all his excursions (and about a dozen of them are related), Mr. Porter appears to have been a restless and rapid traveller, doing usually about two days' work in one. His time seems to be as precious as that of a New England minister on three months' leave of absence. He stops at a town only long enough to take its bearings by the compass, to copy its inscriptions, to ascertain its condition and numbers, and then is off again on the gallop. We have never read a book of travels where the movement is more rapid, and certainly have never seen any book where precision of detail was so joined

to indefatigable speed. Druse hospitality will furnish a Frank guest with a bountiful supper in an incredibly short time; but Mr. Porter's hurry often baffled and amazed his heathen hosts.

The new information which Mr. Porter has given about ruins and ancient sites hardly warrants his confident and rather arrogant tone of assumption when he chances to differ from previous explorers. As a careful investigator, he cannot yet take rank with Burckhardt; and it is necessary to say that his best conclusions are borrowed from the writings of that patient and ingenious traveller. He is more trustworthy when he speaks of the habits and condition of the existing races of Syria, than when he discourses upon its antiquities. He is an excellent observer, but rather a poor reasoner; yet he seems to pride himself on his critical acumen, and goes out of his way to show up the inaccuracies of recent theories about Oriental sites. Poor De Saulcy, who ventures some rash suggestions as to the name of a town near the source of the Pharpar, is crushed by Mr. Porter's ponderous sarcasm. "The more I read of M. de Saulcy's work," says this dignified critic, "the more am I inclined to think that its author is a clever literary *wag*, — a kind of geographical Miguel Cervantes, in fact, — whose sole object has been to turn into ridicule the vast erudition and profound research that some have thought proper to expend in attempts to defend and maintain silly theories, absurd traditions, and insignificant minutiae, connected with the topography of the land." We doubt if the theorizing Frenchman, who is rather tenacious of his fame as a discoverer, would accept Mr. Porter's view of his character and purpose. He might point out some things in this book which show that the author has not quite emancipated himself from "absu theories" and "insignificant minutiae."

We shall concern ourselves with Mr. Porter's book no farther, except to use its brief but admirable account of Damascus for a still briefer sketch of that singular city. No city in the world has had a longer, and few have had a wider, renown. It is the oldest city on earth of which there is any historical record, the only city which can boast of a continued life for nearly forty centuries. The Jews, indeed, delight to

set Hebron above Damascus, as its elder in sacredness, if not positively in years. Was not the city where Abraham fixed his place of burial better than the city from which he brought his steward? But Hebron has nothing ancient left in it except its sacred tomb, and has more than once as a city been wholly destroyed and deserted. Damascus, on the contrary, has in every age been noted and influential among the towns of Syria, and has many times reached a height of greatness which even Jerusalem in the time of Solomon could not surpass. It has changed religions often, has changed rulers oftener, has been fired, and plundered, and dismantled; but no generation has passed in which there has not been on its site something worthy the name of *city*,—a people numerous enough to be watched and guarded, and rich enough to be taxed and robbed. David sent garrisons to Damascus, who were, most likely, quartered where the lazy troops of the “Turkish David” (for so a French rhymester names Abdul Medjid) are still allowed to doze and smoke their days away.

Without relying on the fanciful rendering of the name of *Damascus*, which some interpret to mean “the blood of the righteous one,” and so to refer to murdered Abel,—and without pressing the fact of the *four* rivers which water the plain as identifying this spot with the garden of Eden,—it is safe to affirm that the site which Damascus occupies proves its extreme antiquity as a city. The extraordinary fitness of such a site must have been very early noticed, and turned to account. Easily accessible from every direction, it could not fail to be the mart of immense traffic. The abundant supply of water insured fertility, and precluded the danger of famine. The elevation of the plain above the sea, some two thousand feet, would soften to a delicious balminess the heats of summer, while the high wall of mountain on the north and west would temper the blasts and frosts of winter. On one side, the broad area was large enough for the drilling even of such armies as Eastern monarchs led to the field, and rich enough to supply a larger people with necessary corn and wine; on the other side, the ravines and rocky fastnesses could give an easy retreat and a sure defence to uncounted myriads, if driven from their homes by sudden attack. On the route from the rivers

of Asia to the Great Sea, this would be the natural resting-place. Here, more than anywhere else in Syria, a fastidious eye can see beauty of situation, and an economical judgment confess itself satisfied. If Eden was more charming than the view of Damascus to-day from the white "wely" on the hill of Salahijeh, or more fragrant than the air of its gardens in the first months of spring, then indeed we have ample cause to bewail the loss which the children of men have sustained in the fatal disobedience of the first pair.

Poets and historians, chroniclers, travellers, and monks, of all degrees of culture, of all tastes, and in all tongues, are unanimous in their rapturous descriptions of the loveliness of Damascus. Its glories may decline, but its beauty cannot fade; and those who have seen it half in ruins have been not less ecstatic than those who beheld it in all its grandeur. To Julian the Pagan it was as enchanting as to Jeremy the Prophet, a thousand years before him. The former "city of praise, city of Jehovah's joy," is still the "eye of all the East." It was the first impulse of the generals of Islam to wrest it from the Christians, and it is still the fierce complaint of Christians, that they must leave so noble a possession in the hands of Infidels. Even Jews confess that it is second in beauty only to Jerusalem; and if they prefer a grave by Mount Zion, they prefer, more wisely, a home in Damascus. The elements of beauty there are enduring; and under whatever lordship, with whatever worship, Pagan, Christian, or Moslem, — whatever the signs in the sculptured stone, or the style of the streets and towers, — the first and last impression of the city of Damascus will be an impression of beauty. A Frank finds within the walls much that is disgusting and more that is grotesque; yet the scenes of the streets associate themselves in memory with the strange fascination of that first surprise and that parting vision, and are not remembered like the scenes in the streets of Constantinople or Cairo.

Much of this impression is due, certainly, to the gardens which surround the city on every side, and hide away, to one who looks down upon it, all the deformities which show themselves to one who has entered the gates. These gardens cover a surface of twenty-five square miles. They have all the

richer landscape features, — forest-trees, fruit-trees, flowering-shrubs, lawns, trickling rivulets with cascades, vistas through thick foliage, arranged not according to the rules of the gardening art, yet with a grace as real as that of the environs of Paris or Vienna. The pale tints of the olive-leaf contrast finely with the red blossoms of the pomegranate, — the dark spires of the cypress alternate with the broad canopies of the plane-tree, — there are willows along the watercourses and alders along the pathways, — old sycamores, around which sheep recline at noonday, — the perennial odor of orange-blossoms, — the vine-tree, here stiff and sturdy, and the fig-tree, here pliant and shady, — jessamine and myrtle and rose, — and rare palm-trees to join the illusion of the desert to this luxuriant region. Many of these gardens are carefully cultivated and turned to profit, but more of them are left to their native, spontaneous growth, and are used only as pastures for horses and cattle, or lounging-places for the indolent Moslems, who come out to them daily to dream of Paradise. They are separated from the road-way by rude walls of earth or stone, on which trailing vines hang their clusters of bell-shaped blossoms. Occasionally, at an angle in the path, a small shed covers the meagre establishment of some cheap *café*. And still more rarely may be seen the cottage of some laborer, who is willing to live on the acres which he cultivates. On the outskirts of this wilderness of gardens are a few khans, where the late-arriving camels rest before entering the city with their loads. In their immense extent, and in the variety of their foliage, fruits, and flowers, the gardens of Damascus far surpass those of other Syrian cities. Jaffa is embowered in groves of orange and lemon, and Gaza is fortified by tenfold hedges of enormous prickly-pear; but around Damascus one sees almost all the trees of the field and the forest, — almost all the flowers of tropical and temperate climes.

Damascus is still a walled town, with numerous massive gates, which are among its chief architectural curiosities. The distance around the walls is not less than three English miles. But this area really includes less than half the city. Unlike Cairo and Jerusalem, it has suburbs, which are of great extent, and are not less populous than the city proper.



Indeed, the larger part of the Moslem population live outside of the walls, some of them more than a mile from their places of traffic. Of the space within the walls, nearly a third part is occupied by the houses of Christians and Jews, and more than a third by the bazaars and warehouses. The first painful impression of the interior of Damascus is of a labyrinth to which the clew can never be given; and prolonged study of those intricate ways does not make them much clearer. Mr. Porter's map, however, enables us to see that, if not as regular as the squares of the city of Penn, the streets of Damascus have, in orderly disposition, a decided superiority over those of Boston, one of them at least being really now, what it was named in the days of Paul, "*straight*." This street, a mile in length, runs due east and west, — having at its Infidel end the tall, green minaret of the mosque of Sunan, one of the most ancient and beautiful monuments of the city, and at its Christian end the awkward and ugly hospital for lepers, which marks the site of the house of Naaman the Syrian.

The shape of the city with its suburbs is something like that of a half-opened fan, the Jewish and Christian quarters making the handle. The contour of the city within the walls is that of a parallelogram, curving outward on the southern side. The Christians occupy the northeastern section, the Jews the southeastern. Outside of their quarters, there are no suburbs, — only orchards and cemeteries. The Hotel for Franks, an old Saracenic palace, is just in the centre of the city, and within convenient distance of all the objects of interest. These are very numerous, very various, and adapted to all wants. Within a stone's throw are the famed baths of Damascus, where the bodies of the aristocracy suffer a daily hour of parboiling, kneading, and flaying, as preliminary to a night of bliss. Within a gunshot are the great khans, where cottons, silks, and gold embroideries are stored beneath a dome which the rich columns of ancient Corinthian temples support. A hundred paces will bring you to a *café*, where at evening, by the dim light of a pan of coals and one or two swinging lanterns, a dusky group listen in silence to the storyteller, who rehearses for the thousandth time some legend of

Arab magic. Not far away is that snug retreat, where, to the music of the most comical of little fountains, the Sybarites of Damascus sip sherbet cooled with the snow of Mount Hermon. On the cross streets towards the Jewish quarter are the houses of the weavers of silk and tapestry, where without intrusion you may witness the ingenious and primitive process by which Damascus stuffs take on their marvellous beauty. The Christian churches are all near at hand, and a few minutes' walk will bring you to that plain and secluded room where the Protestant missionaries, Rev. John Porter among them, address on Sunday their handful of hearers.

During the day, the larger part of the population of the city is gathered within the enclosure of the walls, where most of the workshops and storehouses are. The present registered population of Damascus, by the last government census, is 108,600; but this is much too small. From the difficulties in the way of getting correct returns, at least one third must be added. Mr. Porter estimates the number at 150,000, which is rather below than above the mark. Before the visitation of the cholera in 1848, the estimate was not less than 200,000. The races are numerous;—there are Persians, Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Maronites, Druses, and Jews; but at least two thirds, or 100,000, are genuine Arabs. Damascus is peculiarly an Arab city, and all the striking characteristics of that race are seen there in perfection. They are of course all Moslems, —most of them fanatically so. In this last particular they differ from their Persian brethren, whose faith is tempered by mercantile prudence, and who will not lose a customer for the sake of a prayer. The Shiites have not only longer turbans than the Somnites, but have more elastic consciences, and make no scruple of neglecting the muezzin's call when a sharp bargain claims their attention. The number of Persians in the city, however, is comparatively few. They are mostly merchants of the better class; and the wealth which they hold is so useful in tax-paying, that the plague of their heresy is tolerated. Yet your orthodox Moslem wants no personal intercourse with the followers of Ali, and ranks them as only one degree better than the Christian dogs.

The "Turks" are more numerous, and, from their wealth

and official position, quite influential. But they are not loved by the mass of the people. Their language, though it uses the Arabic character, is one which Arabs find it hard to learn; and to the students of Saracen letters it is as coarse and puzzling as the Slavonic tongue to the student of Castilian. Officers of the army, judges, pachas, and the dependents on the government generally, are Turks. Their number is probably some eight or ten thousand.

The piety of the Damascus Moslems is attested by the very numerous mosques, far exceeding in number, if not in beauty, those of Cairo. They are as frequent and as omnipresent as churches in the streets of Rome, and the worship within them has about as much influence upon the morals of the worshippers. The graceful minarets, some of them of great height, rise like a forest of masts above the sea of verdure. The mosques are not here, as churches in Christian cities, among the dwellings of the people, but close to their *shops*, that as little time as possible may be taken from labor to fulfil the onerous duties of devotion. The most magnificent are found in the business quarters of the city. The Great Mosque has around it the custom-house, the British consulate, the silk khan, the slave-market, and the most fashionable shops.

The mosques of Damascus, until very recently, have been closed against Franks; and even now, it is a matter of difficulty to get permission to enter them, or to visit them without insult. They are all built in the same general style, differing only in size and in the costliness of the marble and stone decorations. Their door-ways are an architectural study as remarkable as the door-ways of the cathedrals in Berne or Nuremberg. The arches of the more ancient are as symmetrical and as highly ornamented as any in Toledo or Granada. The Great Mosque of the Omeiyades, which is to Islam in Syria what the Church of St. John Lateran is to Papal Rome, is elaborately described by Mr. Porter, and a ground-plan given of all its parts, ancient and modern. This edifice has a fabulous antiquity. In the days of Roman power (and probably much earlier), an immense heathen temple stood here; and in the present area, the line of colonnades can be traced which once surrounded the altars of Baal. Arab historians have no

scruple in referring many of the existing monuments of the temple to an age, if later than that of Solomon, earlier than that of Cæsar. Christian emperors made haste to consecrate the splendor of this shrine to a better worship, and about the year of grace 400 the pagan temple became, with the name of the "blessed John Baptist," the cathedral of the Damascus bishopric. In the number of images and in the magnificence of its adornings, it gained by its Christian renewal; and it lost nothing, except in the breaking of the images, when the Saracens took possession of it, after they had captured the city. The legends of its splendor in the first ages of their dominion resemble the stories of the Arabian romance. Aladdin's palace might seem but an imperfect copy of the mosque of El Amwy, as it is described in the glowing scrolls of Ibn 'Asâker. It makes a chapter in the history of the Caliphates, like the building of Solomon's Temple in the history of the Hebrew kings. One is bewildered by the number and dazzling splendor of the tessellated pavements, the porphyry columns, the mosaics, the walls studded with diamonds, the lamps, and the wreaths of gold. Still remaining vestiges of magnificence verify much of the description. The Moslems are proud of this vast and venerable edifice, though they do not appreciate all the heathen remains which help to embellish it, or understand all the cabalistic letters which are sculptured on its pediments. It was Mr. Porter's privilege to read to an effendi the dark saying over one of the most beautiful door-ways. The amazed Turk might learn that his mosque bears testimony that "the kingdom of Christ is an everlasting kingdom" and his "dominion endureth throughout all ages." A tradition, however, exists among the faithful, that the first judgment of Christ will take place here. He will alight from his heavenly journey upon the tall southeastern minaret, and descend to the court-yard to separate the sheep from the goats,—that is, the Moslems from the Infidels. Some pious Christians believe that among the hidden treasures of this temple is the head of St. John the Baptist. Perhaps there is no edifice in Syria which combines so finely the best styles of Pagan, Christian, and Saracen building. The quadrangle on which it stands covers an area of half a dozen acres.

The other mosques are less ancient and less splendid than this; yet there are many which claim more than a thousand years, and not a few which are held in high reverence for the tombs which they contain. The great sultans have their gorgeous shrines. The mausoleum of Saladin is to Arabs what the mausoleum of Napoleon is to Frenchmen, and there are many things in the mosque of Melek ed-Dhâher — the banners, weapons, and tessellated floor — to remind one of the Chapel of the Invalides. Some of the mosques in the suburbs are finely situated, and have gardens around them, and one of the most picturesque views of the vale of the Barada is gained from the ground where the mosque of the Sultan Selim stands. These mosques, to Frank eyes, suffer from the blankness of their exterior, and one regrets that the iconoclasm of the Prophet has been so rigidly cherished by his followers. The illuminated letters of the Koran are a poor exchange for the faces of saints or the carved emblems of the Christian faith.

Mr. Porter does not speak favorably of the Moslems in Damascus. Their religion is to him hypocritical and formal, their morality of the lowest kind, and their manners to the last degree disgusting. He stigmatizes them (and we doubt not justly) as “feeble, licentious, and fanatical.” They have fortunately learned to restrain their contempt of Christians so far, that a Frank may pass unmolested through their bazaars, and even go booted and mounted by the door-ways of their temples. The better sort have come rather to love the Anglo-Saxon face, as indicating good bargains now, and future deliverance from their oppressors. At present, the English, with whom the Americans are reckoned, are the most popular foreigners in Damascus; and the crazy dervishes, who play such antics in the streets as are told of early New England Quakers, turn aside from a well-dressed Englishman, and void their saliva on the poor Jew, who creeps after him. Courtesy, nevertheless, has not yet degenerated into servility, and one may not expect from the Moslem merchants such supple fawning as the Greek traders in the warehouses are not ashamed to try in their traffic.

The literary glories of Damascus belong to the Saracens,

but not to their degenerate descendants, except in the manuscript treasures which the richer families own. The education even of the better class of Moslems is confined to the simplest elements, and there are very few who get beyond the Koran. Schools are numerous, and most of the children, at some time or other, go to them; but they correspond to our primary schools. A very small proportion of the Moslems have knowledge of any European language. The old Arabian tales are learned chiefly by oral repetition, and by frequent hearing; it is not easy to find in Damascus Arabic copies of the "Thousand and One Nights." The genuine Moslem takes very little interest in anything beyond the details of his daily trade, and the preparation of his daily luxuries. Mr. Porter does not mention any proofs of that scrupulous honesty, that noble generosity, that large intelligence, which poetic travellers have ascribed to the aristocratic Damascenes. The intelligence of a Damascene is limited ordinarily to his piastres, his pipes, his sword-blades, his horse, and his harem; and if he knows the quality of these, he is content to take other things for granted, and to let the rest of the world alone.

The sects of Christians in Damascus are as numerous as in a Connecticut village, no less than *nine* being registered and taxed. Together, they number probably not far from 20,000 souls. Four fifths, at least, celebrate their worship according to the Greek ritual, but the larger half of these claim the name of "Catholic," and acknowledge as their head the Bishop of Rome. There is a most edifying hatred between the orthodox and the schismatic Greeks, which the Russian war has only increased. The Czar is the gracious protector of the orthodox, and has signalized his friendship by large annual presents. The name of Nicholas will long be associated with the barbaric show of the Damascus cathedral. The same schism, cunningly fomented by Jesuits and Franciscan monks, who have made for some centuries full proof of their Syrian ministry, has rent the churches of the Armenians and the Syrians proper. The Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians all have two sets of priests, and two sets of chapels. An American Protestant finds it as hard to tell the difference in faith or in wor-

ship of these bodies, as that between the "New Schools" and the "Old Schools" of which he hears in his own land. Of the ten places of Christian worship, he can see nothing to choose, except in the size of the rooms and the gorgeousness of the decorations. In all there is the same style, the same arrangement, the same intolerable whining at the altars, and the same profane mummery. Only one of the chapels is honored in keeping a Scriptural association. In the northwestern corner of the city, near the wall, the Latin monks say mass in the cavern where St. Ananias received the angel's message. It is astonishing, we may remark, that so great a proportion of the Biblical worthies were dwellers in *caves*. The house of Judas, in the street called Straight, was once a shrine, but is now owned by a fanatical Turk, who warns all Infidels off from the premises.

The Christian education of Damascus is but little better than the Moslem. The schools are of the poorest description, and even the boasted excellence of the Lazarite seminary seems only to amount to this, that *French* is taught there. It is the consolation of the Protestant missionaries for their scanty conversions, that they have successfully introduced a higher grade of secular instruction. Their high school contains upwards of fifty pupils, and has already been long enough in operation to test the possibility of a liberal education in an Eastern city. The mission has been in existence about a dozen years. It is supported partly from England and partly from the United States, and has five gentlemen in its service, one of them a physician. Its first intention is to convert the Jews, and the Christians whom it can win over are an additional gain.

In spite of Moslem prejudices, and the obstacles which suspicion, bigotry, and rapacity have thrown in their way so long, the Christians of Damascus are rapidly gaining in wealth and influence, and have the lead already in many of the chief branches of traffic. They are largely interested in the manufacture of those splendid, gold-embroidered shawls and scarfs, which some travellers have set down as among "the lost arts" of Damascus. Their average morality is better than that of the Moslems, except in the item of veracity, in which they

have and deserve the reputation of the ancient Cretans. The better class are fond of display, and spend a great deal upon dress and the decoration of their houses. An occasional panic alarms them; and from time to time they imagine that the rabble of the suburbs will break in upon their quarter and cut their throats. But they are getting gradually over their fears, and are parading the wealth which they have secretly accumulated. The spectacle may now frequently be witnessed of a Christian effendi, in his robes of silk and fur, followed in the bazaars by his train of servants and pipe-bearers,—a degree of presumption which, a few years ago, would have been met with a shower of curses and a volley of stones. The real security of Damascus Christians, however, is in the flags of the consulates.

The Jews in Damascus are less numerous than the Christians. Their whole number is registered at 4,630, but probably amounts to six or seven thousand. They are still, as they have been for ages, the money-changers of the city, and no great transaction of trade, no important movement of government, can go on without them. Their history here has been as checkered and romantic as in Spain or Germany; but after long ages of oppression they have reached a point where they can feel at ease, and display fearlessly their great riches and their domestic luxuries. The chief Jewish bankers are the most powerful men in Damascus, and have an influence like that of the Rothschilds in Europe. They live together in the southern section of the city.

The richness and magnificence of the houses in Damascus have given every traveller a chance to indulge in high-wrought extravagance of epithet. The court-yards, shaded by orange-trees, cooled by fountains, illuminated by polished tiles of porcelain and marble,—the sumptuous divans of damask and satin, with their cushions of down, their figures of silver and gold, and their long tasselled fringes,—the lofty walls, studded with mirrors and jewels, and the quaint ceilings, with their myriads of horseshoe arches, wrought in green and purple and crimson,—the luxurious arcade, with its furniture of dignified chibooks and perplexing nargilehs,—the balcony on the roof, where on a summer evening the family come to



breathe the cool air and look out upon the moon-lighted gardens and towers,—the precious woods, and the precious stones, and the precious metals, of these Damascus houses,—have seemed to realize all the legends of the days of Haroun Al Rashid. The number of these fine houses is not so large as to make them characteristic of the general domestic luxury of the Damascenes. Only a few of the more wealthy have mansions which exceed the beauty of an English cottage, or the comforts of a Western cabin. The blank and bare exterior corresponds with the most frequent view of the interior. Very little magnificence is shown on the outer walls, and the principal door-way is seldom high enough to be entered without stooping. Here and there are palaces painted in alternate stripes of red and white,—like the new Church of All Souls in New York,—and in a few instances fragments of ancient architecture are so arranged as to produce a pleasing effect. The domes of the warehouses and mosques are often beautiful and symmetrical, but it is impossible to see them except from the tops of the houses; the narrowness of the streets and the awnings which are flung across quite hide them from view.

It requires some ingenuity and more patience to trace the line of the wall, concealed by rubbish and by crowded buildings, as a large part of it is. In some places it is double, and even treble, and all along there are marks of extreme antiquity. The Sultans of different epochs, as well as the earlier Grecian and Roman rulers, have left their memorials in the graceful shaping of the towers and the gate-ways. Several of these bear the signature of Nûr ed-Din, the famous Atabek conqueror, who prepared the way for Saladin, and inaugurated the second age of Moslem grandeur. The east gate, near which modern Catholic tradition has strangely fixed the scenes of St. Paul's conversion and escape, is a very perfect specimen of the ancient Roman arch, deformed, like the tomb of Cecilia Metella at Rome, by the mediæval battlements which frown above it. There are eight of these gate-ways now in use. None are so rigidly guarded as the gates of Jerusalem, and the rule about sunset closing does not here apply.

The Castle of Damascus, which stands at the northwest

corner of the city wall, has still a formidable look, which justifies its history of terror and blood. The walls are but little dilapidated, and stately towers stand high and strong around it. From the gardens of the Grand Café, where some hundreds of indolent smokers seek at evening their quiet pleasure, may be studied across the intervening moat the art of Romans, Byzantines, and Saracens in castle-building. In form and proportions the structure reminds one of Warwick Castle in England. It has lost its ancient importance; its rich apartments are all dismantled, the arabesques have been torn from its ceilings, and even for barracks it is but little used. All that one sees within it is a meagre armory and immense piles of rubbish. Arabic and Persian chroniclers have described in the most glowing language the strength and the massiveness of this building. Even Tamerlane, the Mogul Alexander, was for a long time unable to capture it, and the most bloody of his numerous butcheries was perpetrated on those who here dared to resist his arms. The castle was once the Governor's palace. But now that functionary lives just outside the wall, in a barrack-like building, which is in style eminently characteristic of its practical and economical builder, Ibrahim Pacha. It is to be regretted that this sagacious general had so brief a lordship in Syria, and that he could not carry his common-sense views of policy a little farther. His name to the Arabs is the synonyme for cruelty, but to Franks, wherever mentioned in the East, it means the reform of abuses and the clearing away of nuisances.

The rivers of Damascus have been its boast ever since the indignant answer of Naaman to Elisha. An unprejudiced observer will confess that Naaman had reason for his wrath. There is no water in Syria comparable to that clear mountain stream which still sends fertility through the fields and gardens, and coolness into the streets, court-yards, and chambers of the Arabic capital. The Barada, which Mr. Porter has demonstrated to be the "Abana" of Scripture, is the chief source of the prosperity and beauty, pleasure and health, of Damascus. A thousand channels, great and small, convey it into every quarter. In a Moslem city, where wine is a prohibited beverage to the faithful, where copious ablutions

are the preliminary to every meal and every prayer, and where even the smoke must be robbed of its fouler properties by passing through liquid, the demand for water is far greater than in a Christian city,—and it is fully met. All night long the music of a trickling fountain is the Damascene's lullaby. In the centre of every mosque gigantic fountains of marble or porphyry receive and disperse a perpetual stream. The winding course of the river through the suburbs and around the walls may be traced by the long rows of stately trees which line its border. Numerous *cafés* on its margin form the centres of resort for those who come out to enjoy the quiet laziness which is a Moslem's ideal of pleasure,—to look passively upon the gambols of children, upon the frantic feats of horsemanship, or the ponderous grandeur of a Turkish military review. The heart of Paradise is fixed on the banks of this river, and the elders daily sit, as they believe, where Adam sat beneath the Tree of Life, untroubled by any such devilish sophistry as seduced him. It is remarkable that so small a river (for its whole length is less than a hundred miles), should furnish such a large and unfailing volume of water. It has no tributary streams of importance, and its chief supply is from its fountain near Zebdâny, about a day's journey northward in the Anti-Libanus range. Its mouth is in a shallow lake, some twenty miles east of the city. The current is rapid, and the water is always bright and sparkling. Several of the canals are nearly as large as the main stream. Small mills are built along their sides. The "Pharpar," which is coupled with the "Abana" in Scripture, has been by Mr. Porter identified with the modern 'Awaj. Its proper stream flows in an easterly direction, some seven or eight miles to the south of the city, but its waters are brought by canals nearly to the suburbs.

Not the least attractive spots in Damascus are the cemeteries, Christian and Moslem. The monuments are generally well cared for, of white stone or of marble, some of them enclosed in a sort of tabernacle. At one end of the grave, or upon the top of the oblong stone, is usually a pot, in which myrtle is planted, and by pious hands kept fresh and green. Trees grow thickly in the enclosure,—more than others, the

solemn cypress, which contrasts well with the whiteness of the monuments. The Christian cemeteries have not the tombs of many great men, but are privileged to show the resting-place of some eminent saints, chief of whom is that "George the Porter" who helped St. Paul to escape by the nocturnal basket stratagem. Every Catholic Christian's body is brought to this tomb to be prayed over before its burial. Just opposite is the identical window from which the Apostle descended.

In the Moslem cemeteries are many remarkable tombs. Three of the wives of Mohammed, and his granddaughter, lie buried in "the Cemetery of the Little Gate." Travellers from the Holy Land pass near their tombs as they enter the city. In the same graveyard are the monuments of Moäwyeh, the founder of the dynasty of the Omeiyades, and of the historian Ibn 'Asâker, from whom Mr. Porter constantly quotes. Hundreds of monuments, in this and the other cemeteries, have for the Arabs sacred associations which Christians cannot understand.

The wealth of Damascus is derived from the large traffic of which it is the centre. From all directions caravans come with heavy or costly merchandise. The regular customers are the neighboring tribes of Arabs, and the mountain-races of the Lebanon. In the spring, the silk-merchants expect to make something handsome out of Frank travellers, who pay readily for their wares twice or thrice the market value. The great business season is the month Ramazan, the Lenten season of Islam, when the companies of pilgrims from Turkey and Asia Minor, the Caucasus and Persia, meet in rendezvous at Damascus on their way to Mecca. The pain of abstinence from pipes and coffee during daylight hours is relieved by the briskness of bargain and barter. It is rather singular that the Arabs should make such a distinction between "Hadji" and "Howadji," "pilgrim" and "merchant," when, in Damascus at least, the two functions seem almost identical. The "Change" of Damascus is the court-yard of the principal mosques. The pilgrims from Constantinople send their valuables to the mosques for safe-keeping while they are absent, and so make their houses of prayer storehouses for goods; and when they reach Damascus, they go to the houses of prayer to learn the

market prices, to negotiate exchanges, and to settle the balance of trade. The mosques of Damascus are to its bazaars, in the sacred month, what the banking-houses in Wall Street are to the warehouses in all the streets adjoining.

We quote, as a specimen of Mr. Porter's best style, his short and graphic description of these bazaars, and the scenes in them.

"To those accustomed to the capitals of Europe, with their broad streets, spacious squares, and splendid buildings, this city must appear filthy, irregular, and even half ruinous. The streets are narrow and tortuous; the houses on each side like piles of mud, stone, and timber, heaped together without order. A plain portal, or a gaudy fountain, or a mosque rich in the minute details of Saracenic architecture, is the only thing that gives any variety. On approaching the centre of the city, however, the stranger's eye is soon attracted by the gay bazaars, and by the picturesque groups that, in their gorgeous costumes, crowd them, or lounge in the open *cafés*. Every Eastern nation and tribe has there its representative; and the whole resembles a *bal costumé* more than a scene of every-day life. There is the Damascus merchant, with flowing robe and capacious embroidered turban, sitting with calm dignity in the midst of his goods. Beside him is a Turkish Effendi, decked in a caricature of Frank costume, badly made and worse put on. Here is a mountain prince sweeping along in crimson jacket covered with gold embroidery; the open sleeves hang gracefully behind, hussar fashion, while underneath are seen the delicate hues of the rich silk vest. A long train of secretaries, pipe-bearers, servants, and guards follow him. Yonder is a Bedawy, spare in form and of dark visage; his piercing eye glances stealthily on all who meet him, and his step and bearing are constrained; he is dressed in a simple woollen *abeih*, with broad stripes of white and brown; and a rope of camel's hair binds on his head the gay *kefîjeh*. Away beyond him stands a Druse sheikh, arrayed in a gorgeous silk robe interwoven with threads of gold, and a carefully-folded turban of spotless white; his left hand grasps the silver hilt of his heavy scymitar, while fierce determination and undaunted courage are reflected from his proud features. Here too is a Kurdish shepherd, with shaggy sheepskin cap and stiff felt capote; and behind him marches a stately Persian, whose lofty conical head-dress, long tight robe, and flowing beard, almost make you believe that one of the monuments of Nineveh has started into life again. By the door of that *café* is a group of villanous-looking Albanians, with their voluminous kilts and fagots of weapons stuck in their belts. The

strange figures that are seen mingling with the throng, enveloped from head to foot in white sheets, are women.

“And the bazaars themselves are scarcely less attractive than the people that fill them. A long row of open stalls, only a few feet deep, extends along each side, and here, ranged on rude shelves, are temptingly displayed the merchant's stores. Silks, and embroidered scarfs, and golden-wrought tissues of the city itself; carpets and curiously inlaid ornaments and caskets from Persia; shawls from Hind and Cashmere; weapons of every form and character, richly ornamented with gold and gems,—such is the varied picture on which the eye rests as one wanders amid the gay labyrinth of bazaars. To the Frank stranger everything seems new and odd; and yet he himself is the only object of wonder to the hundreds that surround him. The principal bazaars are always clean; and the sloping wooden roofs, though not very picturesque, serve to keep them cool in summer and dry in winter. The streets are cleaner and better kept than those of most Turkish cities.”—Vol. I. pp. 30–32.

“Almost every branch of industry has its own circumscribed place in the bazaars or khans, and we have thus the spice-bazaar, the tobacco-bazaar, the shoe-bazaar, the silversmiths' bazaar, and a host of others. It is interesting to wander through the different markets, and observe the various departments of trade and manufacture in full operation. Here are long rows of bearded merchants sitting in the midst of piles of silk and cotton goods, stately and motionless as the statues of the ancient deities in their temple shrines. A few steps farther and the scene is changed: hundreds of busy hands are engaged in stitching and ornamenting the neat, soft yellow slipper, or the curious gondola-shaped red overshoes. Let us now pass through this diminutive old gate-way, and we enter a vast covered area, whose shattered roof, dimly seen through clouds of smoke, is supported here by massive pier and there by stately column. The din of hammer and anvil is almost deafening, and swarthy figures are seen through the gloom sitting on dirty hobs and round miniature furnaces. Heaps of the precious metals, and ornaments of various forms and chaste designs, are by their side, while diamonds, emeralds, and rubies glitter in their hands. Passing through this busy scene, we enter another bazaar, no less noisy. Here are scores of carpenters engaged in the manufacture of the ornamental clogs worn universally by the Damascus ladies. Observe how they work, all squatting. One is planing a board, holding it with his toe. Others are carving pieces of wood, or inlaying them with silver and mother-of-pearl; and while the hands ply the mallet and chisel, the toes do duty as a vice!”—Vol. I. pp. 57, 58.

Mr. Porter gives a summary of the history of Damascus, dividing it into five periods. The *first* comprehends its history prior to the Assyrian conquests, and is learned almost entirely from the notices in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the works of Josephus. In this period the city was always important, and for a considerable time was the capital of an independent kingdom. The *second* period extends to the conquest of Asia by Alexander, when, after having been subject for several centuries to the Assyrian, Babylonian, Median, and Persian empires, Damascus passed into the hands of another race. In this period, though important and flourishing, the city was overshadowed by the greater capitals, Nineveh, Babylon, Ecbatana, and Susa. The *third* period includes the time between the Grecian and the Roman conquest, — between Alexander and Pompey. In this period, Damascus was the theatre of incessant and innumerable wars, feuds, and intrigues, changed masters continually, and was for nearly three centuries the most tempting prize for cupidity and ambition. The *fourth* period ends with the conquest by the armies of Islam, and embraces the entire sway of the Roman and Byzantine emperors in Syria, the extinction of Paganism, and the establishment of Christianity. Of this period, Mr. Porter has given us less information than its importance and its length — seven hundred years — would seem to require. In the history of the Ebionites, of the Gnostics, and of the Oriental Episcopate, Damascus fills a conspicuous place. We should have been glad of larger extracts from that Arabic manuscript of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, which Mr. Porter has in his possession. The *fifth* period includes the history of the city for the last twelve centuries, beginning with the splendid empire of the Caliphs. The shifting fortunes of the city under the various dynasties, the successive rule of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Ottomans, the alternating growth and decline, down to the present time, with short sketches of the great leaders, are given by our author as well as could be expected in the compass of five-and-twenty pages.

We hope that Mr. Porter's very just observation about the *importance* of the history of Damascus, and his facilities for

writing such a history, will induce him to prepare another volume, in which the topic may be fully treated. A translation or abridgment of the great work of Ibn 'Asâker, of which he makes such frequent mention, would be a valuable fruit of his residence and studies in the romantic city. At present, we are compelled to take on trust the literary glories of the reigns of the Caliphs. Comparatively little of their science, scholarship, and song is known to us. It is not enough that we have in theology the confused reasonings of John the Hermit, and in romance the uncertain legends of the story-telling sisters, to illustrate the name of Damascus.

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ART. III. — *Genealogies of the Families and Descendants of the Early Settlers of Watertown, Massachusetts, including Waltham and Weston; to which is appended the Early History of the Town.* With Illustrations, Maps, and Notes. By HENRY BOND, M. D. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1855. 8vo. pp. 1094.

THIS formidable volume would challenge a peculiar attention, were it only on the score of its size and the fulness and thoroughness of its contents. If we apply the maxim, "In all labor there is profit," to the years of toil and of painstaking research which must have been employed to gather the materials for this work, we should have to take for granted, or be able to show, some obvious uses of practical good as served by the volume. For ourselves, we are personally no lovers of such tasks as Dr. Bond has here brought to an amazing result; yet we think we can put a fair appreciation upon the motives engaged in them, and, besides recognizing their interest for individuals, whose names and descent are recorded on the page, can discern some public advantages in them. We therefore love to have such works prepared. It is, we believe, a well-understood fact, that the "endless genealogies," against the study of which a wise counsellor warned a young disciple, were genealogies of æons and false divinities, and